

quick facts

About...Mumps (Infectious parotitis)

What is mumps?

Mumps is a viral illness that affects glands that produce saliva. These glands are located near the jaw area on both sides of the face and neck. Infection can occur on one or both sides.

What are the symptoms of mumps?

Symptoms of mumps may include:

- Fever
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Pain below the ears
- Swelling and tenderness along the jaw and in front of and below the ear(s)
- Possible swelling of the testicles in males

People who do not have swelling may still spread the virus to others.

How is mumps spread?

The mumps virus is spread by contact with saliva or droplets that are released through the nose or mouth when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Persons with mumps should stay home from child care, school, or work during the contagious period to prevent spreading the disease. People with mumps are contagious for three days before and five days after the appearance of symptoms.

Who is at risk for mumps?

Anyone who has not had two doses of mumps-containing vaccine (usually measles-mumps-rubella, or MMR) is at risk for mumps, but the risk is greatest for international travelers or individuals who are in contact with international travelers. Mumps occurs in the United States but is more common in other parts of the world. Anyone traveling outside the United States should be vaccinated for mumps. There is an increased risk of miscarriage in women who are infected with mumps during the first trimester of pregnancy, but there is no evidence that mumps infection during pregnancies carried to term result in birth defects. Complications of mumps, such as encephalitis, hearing loss, and swollen testicles, are more likely to occur in adults.

How do I know if I have mumps?

See your health care provider if you have been exposed to someone with mumps or if you have symptoms of mumps. Your health care provider may test you for mumps or see if you are immune to the disease. Many viruses and bacteria can cause swelling and tenderness similar to that caused by mumps virus.

How is mumps treated?

Since mumps is a viral infection, antibiotics are not effective. Currently, there are no antiviral medications used to treat mumps. Bed rest, a soft diet (to reduce pain when chewing), and pain reliever for headaches and muscle aches are often recommended.

How can mumps be prevented?

The MMR vaccine is safe and effective for preventing mumps infection. Most schools and licensed child-care providers require proof of vaccination or immunity to mumps before entry. If you have not had mumps and/or have no record of having the MMR vaccine, see your health care provider to decide if you should receive the vaccine. Two doses of vaccine normally provide lifelong immunity.

All information presented is intended for public use. For more information, please refer to: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/mumps/in-short-adult.htm>.

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